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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTH CENTURY *

FOR a thousand years Rome refused to acknowledge even the existence of international relations.¹ From the agreement with the Latins in 486 B. C. down to the end of the reign of Justinian in 565 A. D., she dealt with no nation as an equal and recognized none as her peer. The peoples with whom she came in contact were either bound by treaty, and then they were subordinate, or not bound by any tie, and then they were at war.² She offered them no middle course; they entered her territory as vassals or remained outside as enemies. Once she had annexed most of the ancient seats of Hellenistic culture, the distinction between Rome and non-Rome became synonymous with the distinction between civilization and barbarism. Just at this juncture in her history the Principate superseded the Republic. Under the inspiration of Augustus Rome became conscious of the exalted duty imposed by the position she had won among men. Hence-

* Paper read at the Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association, December 29, 1940, New York City.

¹ This paragraph hardly requires documentation since it merely restates a commonplace of Byzantine history; cf. Franz Dölger, "Die Kaiserurkunden der Byzantiner als Ausdruck ihrer politischen Anschauungen," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 159 (1939), 230-33. The ideal of the Ruler in the ancient absolutist states and particularly in Rome has elicited a great deal of attention lately especially from German writers; cf., e.g., the most recent study, Johannes A. Straub, *Vom Herrscherideal in der Spätantike*, *Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte*, 18 (Stuttgart, 1939).

² Mommsen-Marquardt-Humbert, *Manuel des antiquités romaines* (3rd ed., Paris, 1887), I, 286; VI², 207.

forth renouncing her past of idle conquest and brute exploitation, she dedicated herself to the noble task of educating mankind out of its petty rivalries and insularities into a vast community of one culture and one allegiance. So long did she dominate, so deep into the dim and mythical past went her remote origins, so firmly seated was her power, that, to the political thinkers of the early centuries, Rome was eternal, and the situation that she had created bodied forth for them the eternal order of the universe—a philosophy readily comprehensible to any one who recalls the shock of October, 1940, when the fall of Britain seemed imminent and the foundations of the earth shaken. To the theorists of that day, then, Rome was the world; her Emperor was God; her law was Providence. Beyond and around her roared the primitive Chaos, and her destiny it was in the course of an endless reign to subdue that outer wilderness, to impose organization, and impart culture. With the coming of Christianity this ideal did not die, rather was it baptized and transformed. The old Empire emerged from the font as the Christian World State, whose new and high mission was to preach the Gospel to every nation. The conquest of non-Rome by Rome now meant not only the victory of civilization over barbarism, but the triumph of Christianity over paganism, of the powers of light over the principle of darkness, of God over the devil and hell.

“In olden times,” writes Eusebius, the first political theologian,³ “the world was divided into a great number of governments. This division came from the diversity of gods that were adored. But today the cross, the instrument of salvation and the trophy of victory, has been revealed to the world and has advanced against the demons. Instantly the work of the demons, that is, the false gods, has been scattered like the wind. One God is announced to all, one empire stands to receive and embrace all. Thus by the heavenly will two seeds have been cast upon the earth at the same time and have grown and covered the earth with their shadow, the Roman Empire and the Christian faith, destined to unite the entire human race in the bonds of an eternal concord. Already have the barbarians and the peoples on the farthest

³ Straub, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-29; Hans Eger, “Kaiser und Kirche in der Geschichtstheologie Eusebs von Cäsarea,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 38 (1939), 97-115.

unknown shore heard the voice of truth. There its conquests shall not stop, but they shall extend even to the bounds of the earth." ⁴

Thus history as Eusebius interprets it showed a continuous evolution. Mankind had risen from primitive chaos through ages of dissension to the perfect unity achieved by Constantine the Great. Henceforward the Empire and the Church were hand in hand to subdue all the earth to the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ. Thus Constantine and his successors would mirror the everlasting royalty of God, and the Christian World State would reproduce in this life the perfect harmony of the eternal kingdom of heaven.

That Rome never in the whole course of her history abdicated these lofty claims is the view universally accepted by modern scholarship.⁵ Occasionally a writer such as K. Güterbock ⁶ or R. Helm ⁷ has maintained the opposite, but, as G. Ostrogorsky showed in his review of the latter's study,⁸ Helm fails to prove this point. He does not distinguish between Rome's temporary acceptance of a situation and the permanent renunciation of sovereignty, especially over territory that she had at any time ruled. During the fourth and fifth centuries the barbarians swarmed across the Empire and created within it states to some extent independent. Rome was then too weak to assert her claim to world supremacy, but that she never dreamt of abandoning it is quite clear from the fact that, when Justinian found himself in a relatively stronger position than the intruders, he retook the occupied regions as his natural right. In other words, Rome perforce tolerated the existence of these nations but never acknowledged their right to independent existence.⁹

⁴ *Laus C.* 16, pp. 248-50, ed. Heikel, quoted from Charles Diehl, *Justinien et la civilisation byzantine au vi^e siècle* (Paris, 1901), p. 132; cf. Eger, *op. cit.*, pp. 111 f.

⁵ Dölger, *Kaiserurkunde d. Byzant.*, pp. 231 f.

⁶ *Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians* (Berlin, 1906), p. 4.

⁷ "Untersuchungen über den auswärtigen diplomatischen Verkehr des römischen Reiches im Zeitalter der Spätantike," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, 12 (1932), 378.

⁸ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 36 (1936), 442 f.

⁹ Diehl, *Justinien*, pp. 129-34.

The purpose of the present article, however, is to demonstrate that at the end of the sixth century Rome unequivocally recognized the right of Persia to exist as a sovereign and independent state on terms of equality with herself.¹⁰ Persia was Rome's eternal foe. They fought interminably, not because of any real clash of interests, nor for annexation of territory, but because Persia had precisely the same pretensions to world authority as Rome itself. The Sassanid monarchs, looking upon themselves as the legitimate successors of the ancient Achaemenids, drew their inspiration from the mighty figures of Cyrus and Darius.¹¹ They moved in the vision of that moment when once again the ruler of Ctesiphon should be the earth's unique King, and once more the unchangeable laws of the Medes and Persians should govern every race from the banks of the Indus to the high Nubian plateau. Of necessity the two empires were implacable enemies, as irreconcilable as their political philosophies were uncompromising.

In the course of centuries this conflict of principle crystallized into a bitter quarrel over Rome's contributing to the maintenance of garrisons in the Caucasus. Through this range there are only two passes, one about midway between the Black and the Caspian Seas, the other at the eastern extremity. The occupation of these spots prevented the inroads of the wild barbarians living to the north and constituted the easiest and most economical method of safeguarding the provinces of Asia Minor from devastating raids. Consequently, Nero, when Armenia became his vassal, had readily agreed to subsidize the garrisoning of these points.¹² In the peace made in 363 after the death of Julian, Jovian ceded Armenia, and with it its dependencies south of the Caucasus, Iberia and Albania.

¹⁰ Among the numerous sources for the period under discussion, 572-91 A. D., only Menander Protector and Theophylactus Simocatta have any importance for the subject of this article. They alone deal authoritatively with the official diplomatic relations. The present article touches upon political and military events only in so far as necessary to understand the diplomatic exchanges and aims.

¹¹ Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien*, p. 2.

¹² J. Marquart, *Eranšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i*, Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, III, 2 (Berlin, 1901), 95 f.

Thus the passes came directly under the control of Persia, and Sapor II obtained the continuance of the payments, partly because as the new suzerain he claimed the right to all the previous privileges of the position, and partly because Rome derived as much benefit from the defense of the passes as Persia itself.¹³ This was, of course, merely a pretext under which Rome pursued her normal policy of buying off barbarians when she was too busy otherwise or too weak to combat them. Subsequently she withdrew or paid the sums according to circumstances and always in the same supercilious spirit.

But the whole question assumed an altogether different significance at the beginning of the sixth century. Persia's push toward a place in the sun gathered impetus particularly in the reign of Kawad (488-531), who by weakening the power of the feudal nobility welded his country into a strongly centralized state.¹⁴ After this achievement he demanded the renewal of the subsidy and, receiving a flat rejection, declared war in 502. The Emperor Anastasius took advantage of a truce to create two mighty fortresses on the frontier, Dara and Theodosiupolis, and this in defiance of previous pacts.¹⁵ Finally after four years of hostilities he compromised in 506 by still denying the payments for the Caucasus but agreeing to an indemnity for the breach of treaty. This makes it evident that the amount of money in itself did not constitute the real issue; otherwise Anastasius would never have consented to giving it under any title. Further, his strengthening of the border indicates that he sensed something in the situation that spelled a new menace to Roman security.

So far as Kawad is concerned, it is not difficult to understand why he thought it worthwhile to fight over the comparatively insignificant sum. Characteristic of the Persians was an extreme national vanity. Firmly convinced of their superiority they sought always to have visible manifestation of it in their external relations. This trait appears constantly in their literature, inspires

¹³ *Loc. cit.*; Ernst Stein, *Geschichte des spätrömischen Reiches*, I (Vienna, 1928), 264.

¹⁴ Arthur Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1936), p. 347.

¹⁵ E. W. Brooks, *Cambridge Medieval History*, I, 481-83.

the great epic of Firdausi, and meets the reader in their every word and action as recorded by Byzantine historians. Their great kings had to embody this conception, they had to dominate foreign powers in order to win any lasting prestige at home. In dealing with other countries they always kept in mind the reaction of their subjects and played to the gallery of patriotic self-esteem. Consequently they assume an insufferably haughty and lordly tone in victory and are merely patronizing in defeat. With the Empire they had no real quarrel, since its pretensions to exclusive authority in the world remained entirely theoretical. For almost a century and a half Rome had not made the slightest effort to exert her claim, nor even to win back the territory ceded by Jovian. She wished only peace and freedom from annoyance on her eastern boundary. This rendered her all the more tempting to ambitious sovereigns like Kawad, who had only to force from her some slight token of subordination to win unparalleled honor in his own land. If he had succeeded in extorting the subsidy for the Caucasus, he could have represented it as tangible proof of Persian ascendancy and it was enough to make him the great hero of his people.

The decisive factor in the politics of the sixth century was, however, the change in attitude of the Roman population. It is never to be forgotten that the theory of the Christian World State was not an artificial construction of statesmen or philosophers but the personal conviction of every Christian inhabitant of the Mediterranean lands, whether in or out of the Empire.¹⁶ It simply put into words what each felt intimately in his own consciousness; it expressed his basic and fundamental political attitude. This is why, for instance, throughout this period the various groups within the Empire always crystallized their separatist sentiments in some religious but heretical formula. To us there is nothing unusual about adopting another country and surrendering citizenship in one's own, but to the man of the fourth or fifth century such a transfer of allegiance was inconceivable. There was only one country of which it was possible to be a citizen, only one authority to whom he could owe allegiance, and that was Rome. Outside of

¹⁶ Dölger, *Kaiserurkunde*, pp. 232 f.

her, to his way of thinking, lay barbarism and anarchy. While he did realize his distinctive nationality, it never entered his mind to express it in political independence. To break his connection with Rome was to cast himself adrift without law, without duly constituted authority, without culture, without civilization. He solved the dilemma by ardent partisanship of a heresy; it became the badge of his nationality but did not sever his political affiliations. This psychology had undergone a profound transformation by the beginning of the sixth century. In the fourth century, Rome and non-Rome still remained equivalent terms for civilization and barbarism. In the sixth, when Justinian closed the pagan schools at Athens, the professors fled for refuge and patronage to the court of Ctesiphon.¹⁷ Chosroes I obtained from Justinian permission for them to return safe home and to practise their religion unmolested until their death. This significant incident indicates unmistakably that the Empire had lost its position in public opinion as the unique center of culture. It marks the climax of the long process by which the East dominated the West in art and architecture and the genius of the Orient culminated in the greatest creation of the Occident, the Hagia Sophia. Furthermore, Rome and non-Rome had ceased to be synonyms for Christianity and paganism. The fourth-century Syriac writer Aphraates heartened his coreligionists with the conviction that Constantius would inevitably conquer the Persians; for it was in accordance with the divine design for the spread of the Gospel and the Empire.¹⁸ But the sixth-century Syriac historian, John of Ephesus, has nothing but golden opinions for the broad and humane tolerance of Chosroes, however cautiously expressed.¹⁹ Again, in the fourth century, the Christians suffered at the hands of Sapor II a persecution so unmercifully bloody and cruel as never even under Diocletian; but

¹⁷ Diehl, *Justinien*, pp. 564 ff.

¹⁸ J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'Empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224-632)* (2nd ed., Paris, 1904), pp. 47 f. Bibliothèque de l'enseignement de l'histoire ecclésiastique.

¹⁹ John of Ephesus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, trans. by E. W. Brooks, *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium editum consilio Universitatis Catholicae Americae et Universitatis Catholicae Lovaniensis*, Serr. Syri, Ser. III, 3 (Louvain, 1936), 240-42; cf. *infra*, p. 301, n. 61.

in the sixth, Sebochthes, a Christian envoy of Chosroes at Constantinople, assured Justin II that Christians even in the farthest corners of Persia would fight to the death for their country.²⁰ In the sixth century, then, Persia stood side by side with Rome as a world power in popular estimation. The Sassanids had now succeeded each other for almost three hundred years and had all the prestige that goes with ancient lineage and long honor. Whereas the Chagan of the wild and uncivilized Avars, however great his victories, could not vie with the Emperor but always appeared merely a barbaric chieftain, rude and uncouth, Kawad with an immemorial and sacrosanct tradition of rule in his family, standing as the great representative of oriental culture, was regarded by the Romans on the same level with their own rulers.

This explains why Anastasius could not renew the subsidy for the garrisoning of the Caucasus, even though the sum was insignificant in itself and out of all proportion to the heavy costs of a four-year war. Previously, the Empire had never taken the threat of Persia too seriously, nor shown anything but disdain for her pretensions to world authority. But Anastasius divined the subtle shift of public opinion to a new respect for her and sensed in the situation an ever growing danger to Rome's security. Not content with strengthening his military defenses, he was resolved no longer either to pamper Persian vanity or build up the enemy's reputation.

In the treaty of 533, Justinian determined to settle the whole question with Chosroes I by giving him 11,000 pounds of gold (nearly four million dollars) as quittance of arrears and price of peace.²¹ He took care, however, not to make an agreement for any fixed term of years, the ordinary practice, but "without limit," i. e., abrogable at the will of either party.²² All impatience to

²⁰ Menander, *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum (FHG)*, ed. by C. Müller (5 vols., Paris, 1841-83), IV, 239; also in *Excerpta de legationibus*, ed. by C. de Boor, *Excerpta historica iussu Imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, I (Berlin, 1903), 461.

²¹ Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, pp. 43 f.; Diehl, *Cambridge Medieval History*, II, 29. Diehl has 110,000, which is a misprint.

²² This is obviously the meaning of *πέρας οὐκ ἔχουσα*; "everlasting peace" is a misleading translation.

begin his reconquest of the West, he thought thus to keep his hand free in the East, calculating that he could dispose of the Gothic intruders handily and then teach a lesson to the Persian upstart. He repudiated Anastasius' policy entirely, but not just by yielding the very contributions that his predecessor had denied at the point of the sword. Characteristic of his exalted ideal of the imperial prerogative, he returned in thoroughgoing fashion to the traditional Roman attitude. He treated Chosroes with the same contemptuous indulgence that he had for the barbarian to whose cupidity he threw a sop, intending to crush him at his leisure. His plans miscarried and Chosroes made brilliant use of the opportunity. In 540 he seized the initiative and began a determined onslaught just at the moment when all available troops were needed in Italy and the East could not offer even nominal resistance.²³ In 541 he won his way through Lazica to bases on the Black Sea and conceived the bold design of putting a decisive finish to his agelong rival by a direct attack on Constantinople. In 545 he consented to a partial peace, dictating his own terms. At the price of four hundred pounds of gold per annum (about one hundred fifty thousand dollars) he granted a truce for five years, to extend, however, only to Syria, with hostilities continuing in Lazica. This was, of course, in keeping with his plans on Constantinople. Though apparently realizing his strategy, Justinian impotent in the face of his demands perforce acceded to them. This treaty lasted until 550, and after a year and a half was renewed in 551, Chosroes even insisting that Justinian pay pro rata for the eighteen-month interval.

Though the payments were always tendered for the joint defense of the Caucasus, yet the events of this decade made apparent their incompatibility with Rome's claim to world dominion. They were patently not voluntary contributions but forced levies, and Justinian was compelled to buy peace instead of commanding it. Whereas he had in 533 ignored the precedent set by Anastasius and assumed the stand of snubbing the pretentiousness of Persia, he now no longer dared to leave the treaty indefinite but must

²³ Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, pp. 42-54; Diehl, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 29 f.

make it for a fixed term at a regular rate. Even then far from purchasing safety for the Empire, he only furnished the enemy with a weapon aimed at its very life. Chosroes, already regarded by public opinion as his peer in every other respect, had proved himself his superior in war! As Procopius writes caustically of the second settlement of 551:

These 2000 pounds of gold Isdigusnas [the Persian ambassador] wanted to take then and there but the Emperor wished to give instead 400 per annum in order to have some guarantee that Chosroes would not violate the truce. Later, however, he paid the lump sum in order not to appear to be paying annual tribute. For men are accustomed to be ashamed of shameful names, but not of shameful deeds. . . . The majority of the Romans were very indignant at this truce, though whether justly or unreasonably . . . I cannot say. They argued that this covenant gave the Persians undisturbed possession of Lazica for five years. The Romans could never in the future dislodge them while the Persians would have there a base from which easily to attack Constantinople. The ordinary citizen perceived this and got into a state of helpless rage about it. What the Persians had long desired vehemently, what they had never thought to obtain either by war or any other device, namely, to have the Romans paying tribute to them, this they had gained and more than gained under the guise of a truce. For Chosroes having assessed the Romans at an annual tribute of 400 pounds of gold (this was plainly what he had coveted from the first) had by now collected 4600 pounds of gold for eleven years and six months under pretence of granting a truce. Yet the truce made for tribute was such only in name since meantime he could make war in Lazica. From this the Romans had no hope for the future of ever freeing themselves but perceived that they had become palpably tributary to the Persians.²⁴

At length, however, Justinian made a huge effort and succeeded in regaining most of Lazica. Chosroes, on the other hand, had grown weary of war and was preoccupied with the alarming expansion of Turkish power on his northern and eastern border.²⁵ Both sides, then, agreed to settle their differences in 561, Justinian again capitulating. Chosroes dictated terms practically identical with those of 545 and 551 though a trifle less degrading. He

²⁴ *De bellis*, VIII, 15, ed. by J. Haury (2 vols., Leipzig, 1905), II, 566-69.

²⁵ Diehl, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 30; Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, pp. 55 f.

forced his adversary once more to purchase peace for a set term of fifty years at 30,000 *nomismata* (somewhat more than 400 pounds of gold) the year, the first installment to be a lump sum for seven years in advance, the second for three, and annually thereafter, always, of course, as a joint contribution to garrisons in the Caucasus.²⁶ Further he would not evacuate Suania, a region essential to the defense of Lazica.²⁷ In other words, realizing that his lifetime would not see the downfall of Rome, he at least left an excellent vantage point for some more fortunate successor. The treaty represented a tremendous victory for Chosroes. During the negotiations the Persian ambassador conducted himself with insufferable arrogance, vaunting that Chosroes really deserved his official title "King of Kings" because he had since his accession subdued ten kings and forced ten nations to pay tribute.²⁸ Some years later when a Persian and a Roman envoy were both present at the court of the Chagan bidding for Turkish support, they fell into an altercation in his presence and the Persian boasted that "the Emperor was the slave of his nation and paid tribute like a slave."²⁹

From this rapid survey of its history it is easy to understand why the subsidy to the Caucasus became the burning question between the two countries. It is perfectly true that the amount of money involved was comparatively insignificant and came to less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 per cent of Rome's annual budget.³⁰ But it furnished that precise point at which their irreconcilable political philosophies met and clashed. Rome asserted exclusive world dominion, regarded all aliens as little better than savages, and for untold years had been in possession. Persia took the same intolerant attitude toward any foreign power but had to struggle

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 61 f.

²⁷ Menander, *FHG*, IV, 220; *Exc. de leg.*, pp. 188 f.

²⁸ Menander, *FHG*, IV, 209 f.; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 177.

²⁹ John of Ephesus, VI, 23, p. 245, ed. by Brooks; cf. Menander, *FHG*, IV, 288; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 195. The latter does not state what the envoy said but it seems to be the same incident.

³⁰ Ernst Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 1919), p. 5. He concludes (*ibid.*, p. 159) that the budget of the Byzantine Empire did not reach eight million *solidi*.

through three grim and checkered centuries to win the highest throne. Once arrived, she could establish her claim only on the tangible evidence of tribute. Yielding it, Rome abdicated. This was the real issue.

An equally great stigma attached to another provision of the treaty of 561.³¹ Herein both countries consented to bar all admittance to fugitives and to return them, if need be forcibly, to their proper allegiance. To some effects of this agreement no one could take exception, for instance, the restoration of runaway slaves, serfs, and criminals, whether political or otherwise. But time and again those who fled to the Empire for safety had been guilty of no other fault than their faith and had sought refuge from religious persecution in Rome as the avowed defender and champion of Christianity. As a matter of fact, the ordinary Roman, whether right or wrong, seems to have felt that it was principally against just such fugitives that the provision was directed.³² In his eyes, Justinian by submitting to it proved false to his sacred office as protector and propagator of the teachings of Christ and betrayed the very substance and sanctity of the Christian World State.

These insults to the national honor were intolerable to a man like Justin II, who succeeded Justinian in 565 and shared his conception of the majesty and grandeur of the Empire.³³ His eyes were upon the glory of ancient Rome conquering the world. He was resolved to be himself the embodiment of the unyielding and stern Roman as his Empire was still to be the proud ruler of the earth. Determined to assert her supremacy he grasped avidly at the first occasion that presented itself. This was a religious revolt

³¹ Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, pp. 95-99; Diehl, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 30. By a convention distinct from the treaty proper Justinian agreed that if the Christians of Persia were guaranteed full religious freedom they in turn would make no effort to convert the adherents of Zoroastrianism. It is difficult to determine the implications of this provision. It has no apparent influence on the subsequent events. Cf. *infra*, p. 314, n. 92.

³² This attitude is nowhere explicitly stated in Menander, the only source, but is evident from the popularity of Justin's later repudiation of this provision. Cf. *infra*, p. 292, n. 39.

³³ Norman H. Baynes, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 264 f.

in Armenia.³⁴ The Persian governor had decided to build at Dvin a Zoroastrian fire-temple. As this contravened directly the treaty that guaranteed freedom of worship to Armenia,³⁵ the Catholicus objected strenuously and his protest being ignored summoned his countrymen to his support. Meantime they had already assured themselves of aid by a secret agreement with Justin II, who guaranteed that if they did not succeed he would at least offer them sanctuary. The Emperor was as good as his word. As Chosroes insisted that the fire-temple be erected, it came to open and bloody revolt and the final victory lay with the Persians. The ringleaders all fled to Roman territory. This provided Justin II with just the opportunity he desired to assert his right to protect Christianity everywhere irrespective of man-made boundaries. Not content with merely harboring the fugitives he invited them to his capital and received them with marks of signal honor while the whole city acclaimed his deed.

About the same time, in 572, another payment to Persia fell due.³⁶ Chosroes dispatched his envoy to collect it but gave him strict orders to pretend ignorance of the commotion in Armenia in the hope thus to prevent an open break.³⁷ The Persian king had already reached an advanced age, he had allowed his military machine to get rusty, and above all he recognized that if death should come to him while engaged in a desperate struggle with the traditional enemy, it might imperil the succession and throw Persia into anarchy. His ardent desire was to avoid war. When Sebochthes came to the palace Justin did not give him too warm a welcome. The special reason for this was that as soon as he came in to make the *adoratio*, as he bowed low the felt cap which he wore according to Persian custom fell to the floor. Taking this as a good omen the nobles and the throng excited the Emperor with

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 270 f.; Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 21-24. Other grievances between Rome and Persia contributed to the deterioration of relations between them but, as proved by Stein and as will be clear from the sequel, they had no decisive influence on the course of events.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36, n. 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24 f.

³⁷ Menander, *FHG*, IV, 238 f.; *Exc. de leg.*, pp. 460-62.

the flattering promise that Persia was on the verge of succumbing to him. Justin was incited by these expectations and thrown off his mental balance to such an extent as to think that he would get everything he wanted without the least difficulty. When Sebochthes stated the object of his mission, Justin spurned him. "Friendship bought with money" he told him, "is bad, since it is base and servile and a market commodity. The definition of real friendship is one that is equally balanced and not mercenary, the firmness of which is fixed by nature." Flaunting his violation of the treaty he brought up the subject himself and asked whether the ambassador did not wish to discuss the condition of Armenia. To Sebochthes' mild answer that Chosroes had heard of a trifling disturbance to which a stop would be put soon, the Emperor said out in so many words that he had granted asylum to the fugitives and would not tolerate the injustice done them. He and they were members of the same faith. Sebochthes objected that Christians existed all over Persia who would defend her to the death, so Rome in championing Christianity would be attacking Christians.³⁸ Justin brusquely terminated the audience with the arrogant remark that if Chosroes dared move a finger (also means $\frac{7}{8}$ in.), he himself would move an arm (twenty-four fingers) and invade Persia. "Be assured" were the words with which he closed the interview, "that if Chosroes starts war, I shall put him to death and personally appoint the next king of Persia."

This lively portrayal by Menander of the actual scene that precipitated the break brings out clearly the unbalanced passionate disposition of Justin and in his vulgar almost childish defiance of Chosroes the aggrieved pride from which sprang the war.³⁹ It is

³⁸ *Supra*, p. 286.

³⁹ This narrative provides an excellent criterion from which to judge the statements in the other sources about the motives for the war. The only cause assigned by Evagrius, *Hist. eccl.*, V, 7, by John of Biclar, *ad annum* 567, 2, p. 211, ed. Mommsen, and by Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.*, IV, 40, p. 174, ed. Arndt-Krusch, is the protection of the Armenians from persecution. For John of Ephesus, VI, 23, p. 244, ed. Brooks, and Theophanes of Byzantium, *FHG*, IV, 271, this is the principal though not the sole reason (cf. *supra*, p. 291, n. 34, and *infra*, p. 297, n. 50). However, John of Epiphania, *FHG*, IV, 274,

notable that the Emperor harps solely upon those features of the situation which affected Rome's world position. Even if the interference in Armenia had also political aspects⁴⁰ Justin adverts only to the injury that had been done Rome's prerogative as champion of Christianity. Clearly then the war had no other aim than the burning desire to vindicate the honor of Rome and heal her wounded prestige. The niceties of diplomacy would merely have obscured the real issue and Justin brushed them aside. His dramatic action rudely but unmistakably reasserted Rome's political, and especially her religious, world authority.

It was impossible for Chosroes not to accept this challenge. Justin's whole demeanor told more plainly than any words that he regarded his foe in exactly the same light as his predecessor had looked upon the Gothic kingdoms of the West—a trespasser to be bidden off the earth curtly at the owner's pleasure and convenience. For the first years of the struggle that broke out in 572 Chosroes

represents the shielding of the Armenians as more or less a pretext, the "real though hidden cause being the payments and Justin's determination not to have Rome forever tributary to Persia." In the light of Menander's vivid pen picture of the final interview, it is clear that the true cause of the war was psychological, the deep feeling of humiliation at the treaty of 561, and that Justin was determined to go to any length to wipe it out. Apparently, though, it was a matter of opinion whether the imposition of the tribute or the prohibition to protect Christianity was the more galling. John of Epiphania favors the former view and his statement means that the Emperor would not have been nearly so sensitive to the right of his coreligionists in Armenia if he did not have to make the payments. "Hidden cause" then signifies "sub-conscious, unrealized cause," not "cause generally unknown," or "cause not openly admitted," as neither Justin nor Tiberius makes any secret of his resentment at the tribute and John of Ephesus shows plainly, since he reflects the popular view, that its importance in occasioning the war was quite generally known (cf. *infra*, p. 297, n. 50). On the other hand, the preponderant emphasis in the other sources is on the religious side. This fact demonstrates that the vast majority of people resented the infringement of Rome's right to champion Christianity by the treaty of 561 much more bitterly than the imposition of the payments.

Among the sources, Theophylactus Simocatta, *Hist.*, III, 9, 6-11, holds a unique position; in language strongly condemnatory, he thinks that the Romans wanted war at all costs and were quite indifferent as to which of the grievances (all imaginary in his view) provoked it. For the explanation of this extraordinary stand, cf. *infra*, p. 310, n. 88.

⁴⁰ Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 21 f.

proved the master. In 573 he captured the great fortified city of Dara.⁴¹ When, however, Tiberius took over the government as Justin's Caesar in 574, he turned the tables completely. Prosecuting the war with tremendous energy and efficiency he conquered all Armenia, Georgia, and Albania, and forced his antagonist to take the initiative in seeking peace.⁴² The diplomatic missions met on the border in spring of 576. They devoted a full year to discussing who was originally responsible for the war, with, of course, no result whatever. This seems the height of futility but actually constituted an essential element in the studied policy of Tiberius, if properly understood.

His outlook is characterized by Baynes as essentially oriental, i. e., he recognized that the Hellenized provinces of the East were the real Empire and that, too weak and exhausted to hold the West, he had to renounce it for their preservation.⁴³ Stein rejects this view and proves that Tiberius wished, every whit as much as Justinian, to uphold the ancient Empire in all its integrity.⁴⁴ On the other hand, he admits, as everyone must admit, that Tiberius put the settlement with Persia above every other consideration and sacrificed both Italy and the Balkans. He explains this policy by the supposition that the Emperor regarded Armenia as an absolutely necessary reservoir of man power and resolved at whatever cost to annex it. This hypothesis unfortunately encounters so many difficulties that some other explanation has to be sought for Tiberius' concentration on the east.

Tiberius discerned as had Anastasius before him that Persian hostility was on another plane altogether from the harrassing of barbarians and differed from it in essence. The Germanic invaders, though coveting the rich and settled land, revered Rome as the sole source of law and civilization. Far from striving to unseat her, they regarded her as the mother of all authority and sought rather to win from her official recognition as sanction of their position and indispensable condition of legitimacy. But

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46; Baynes, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 272.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 274 f.; Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 68 f.

⁴³ *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 273; cf. p. 276.

⁴⁴ *Stud.*, pp. 89, 117 ff.

Persia's enmity was malignant, aimed at the very principle of her existence and striving for her utter annihilation. The barbarians craved her goods; the Persians sought her life.

Again, the kingdoms that appeared on the Danube were ephemeral phenomena, rising like a thunder cloud on the horizon under the strong impetus of some exceptional ruler, but dissipated with his passing. These barbaric hordes, ever shifting and jostling and displacing each other, changed with almost every new generation. But Persia endured. She had now stood with a long line of kings of a single dynasty and under a stable form of government for 350 years and seemed as eternal as Rome herself. The contrast struck the people of the sixth century forcibly and provided the real ground for their insuperable aversion to the annual subsidies. "From this they despaired for the future of ever freeing themselves." "Justin determined not to have Rome forever tributary to the Persians."⁴⁵ The Emperors could hope by payments to stave off the attack of a barbarian chieftain for a few years until with the dissolution of his power the threat to the Empire and the consequent levies would cease. But the situation in the East was worlds apart. Here the payments were no temporary expedient to relieve a passing crisis; they were as permanent and galling as the enemy that exacted them was stable and arrogant. To be held up and mulcted by a border bandit was an outrage, it was not a dishonor; but to meet regularly a payment forced by an established power was simply to be reduced to the status of a province, "assessed" in the biting words of Procopius "at 400 pounds the year."⁴⁶

The imperious logic of the situation then required that Rome deal with the permanent menace on her eastern border to the exclusion of every other consideration and Tiberius shaped his action accordingly. But he had first to convince Chosroes that the new policy was a fixed tenacious purpose and that no danger elsewhere, however alarming, could deflect it. Rome was immeasurably superior in wealth, population, and organization for war, and Chosroes had learned from his final defeat in Lazica that

⁴⁵ *Supra*, p. 288, and p. 292, n. 39.

⁴⁶ *Supra*, p. 288.

he could win only if his adversary attempted to repel attacks simultaneously on all her borders.⁴⁷ This explains why the two embassies frittered away an entire year in idle recriminations. Anxious as Chosroes was for peace, his interest was to prolong the deliberations to the utmost, as delay always worked in his favor. It gained time not only to recover from defeat but also for the pressure on the Empire from the barbarians to make itself felt and perhaps tip the scales in his favor. The Romans were well aware of this ruse of the Persians, but in this instance Tiberius let them have their way. He was absolutely determined to settle the eastern question but he had to bring home to the enemy that the previous basis of bargaining was gone forever. The hour of reckoning was at hand. If he had shown the slightest impatience he would have made himself a dupe of the traditional Persian policy of seizing upon the misfortunes of the Empire to wring advantages and prestige for herself. By his dogged persistence Tiberius finally convinced Chosroes at the end of 576 that he would deal with Persia exclusively on the basis of their mutual relationship with no heed to conditions elsewhere.

Tiberius had the genius to grasp that the very qualities which rendered Persia so formidable an enemy, her permanence and high culture, offered also the best foundation for Rome's security. Justinian had proceeded on the assumption that he could treat her like any barbarian. Justin II, stung by the ignominy of 561, thought only to vindicate Rome's honor by a violent assertion of sole supremacy. Tiberius with his keen and penetrating analysis saw clearly that the political face of the world had altered radically since the days of Constantine and that Rome no longer surveyed a universe without a rival. With farseeing statesmanship he set himself steadfastly to transforming that rival into a partner. To attempt this with a transient and irresponsible horde like the Avars was absurd; but to unite Rome and Persia in fast friendship, to link them in the joint mission to chasten and educate the barbarians beyond their respective borders, would not only create a stable situation on one frontier but would build a mighty bulwark

⁴⁷ Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, p. 54; Diehl, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 30. Cf. the statement of Hormisdas' envoy, *infra*, p. 306, n. 74.

there secured forever from attack. Such was Tiberius' inspired aim.⁴⁸

Permanent peace on a basis of equal honor—the phrase is Menander's own⁴⁹—this is the keynote of Tiberius' proposals to Chosroes. To the demand of Mebodes, the Persian ambassador, for a continuance of the subsidies, the Roman representatives replied that negotiations could not even begin until any such condition was abandoned. Any arrangement designed to hold the Romans forever to some sort of joint contribution and payment of tribute, whatever name it was given, could not in their view be called peace. Genuine peace, they said, was not something to be bought like a casual bargain at the market. Under such circumstances it could be neither permanent nor stable.⁵⁰

The essence of the Emperor's policy is contained, however, in his settlement of the vexed Armenian question. At the moment his victorious armies occupied all Armenia and Iberia⁵¹ and he agreed to evacuate both, again in the interest of a "steady hold on peace." To quote Menander: "[After Chosroes had withdrawn his demand for payments] everyone in the capital, senate and people alike, were elated and thought that their swords would now lie idle and they would have a really steady hold on peace,

⁴⁸ This is not stated in the sources for Tiberius but for Maurice, but their policy was one; cf. *infra*, p. 308.

⁴⁹ *FHG*, IV, 249, 250; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 465, 30, and p. 467, 3.

⁵⁰ *FHG*, IV, 249; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 465; John of Ephesus, II, 24, p. 63, ed. Brooks; VI, 12, pp. 232-34, ed. Brooks; VI, 21, pp. 241-43, ed. Brooks. The two writers give substantially the same account, with, however, an interesting difference of viewpoint. In Menander, Tiberius regards the payments as obstacles to permanent peace; in John of Ephesus, to honorable peace. The latter reflects the popular interpretation of the Emperor's attitude; if he could not make peace without disgrace he would not make it at all. Not that the former overlooks this feature, because it is precisely in this connection that he uses the important phrase quoted above; when Chosroes finally consented to surrender all claim to subsidies, he describes his capitulation as an agreement "to confirm the peace without money on a basis of equal honor." John of Ephesus uses exactly the same wording at times, e. g., p. 63, ed. Brooks, but on the whole he portrays the partisan admiration of the public for Tiberius as the worthy champion of Rome's cause. Menander, on the other hand, insists rather on the implications of his diplomacy.

⁵¹ *Supra*, p. 294.

since in addition the Caesar was entirely ready to retire from Persarmenia and even Iberia. He understood thoroughly that once the Persians were deprived of so great a territory they would never surrender, not even if their power crumbled completely and became extinct.”⁵² The right of sanctuary for Christians, the immediate occasion for the war, offered no difficulty whatever. Justin II had sworn upon receiving the fugitives to free their fatherland from Persia, or, failing in this, “never to surrender the instigators of the rebellion nor their relatives nor in fact any of their countrymen that wished to share Roman citizenship.”⁵³ Tiberius maintained this to the letter and refused to make peace unless it was definitely understood that anyone either in Persarmenia or Iberia should have free access to the Roman Empire. Chosroes acceded to this demand readily enough, because it had no practical bearing whatever, as Menander expressly states: “He realized perfectly that except for the very few who led the revolt, love of his native land which nature has seated and fixed in mankind would permit no one else to leave Persarmenia or Iberia for a strange country. Especially he anticipated that with the war stopped he would put affairs in Persarmenia and Iberia in proper order.”

To be understood these two proposals have to be considered as a unit. Both Baynes and Stein⁵⁴ see in the latter an agreement dealing only with the authors of the insurrection. But the wording is the widest possible, granting right of asylum to all dissatisfied subjects of Persia in Armenia or Iberia with no restriction of time: “That in addition he would not ratify the peace on any other condition than that safe conduct be given to all the Persarmenians and Iberians who wished to leave their own land and move into Rome.” The universality of the guarantee gives it a very special significance. As has been demonstrated above,⁵⁵ the Armenians’ flight was seized upon by Justin II to avenge the injured rights of Rome as the Christian World State. He forced

⁵² *FHG*, IV, 249; *Ex. de leg.*, pp. 465 f.

⁵³ *FHG*, IV, 250; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 466. Cf. Stein, *Stud.*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 274, and Stein, *Stud.*, p. 69.

⁵⁵ *Supra*, p. 291.

war as an assertion of the imperial prerogative to protect his coreligionists. The stipulation of 561 limiting it was thereby contravened and repudiated. If Tiberius repeated Justin's oath and upheld it as an indispensable condition of peace, it meant that he too required the abrogation of the clause as incompatible with the honor of the Empire. Just as vigorously as his predecessor did he safeguard the religious dignity of his position. Anxious though he was for a final reconciliation, he refused to betray Rome's lofty mission to defend the faith and demanded the privilege of harboring those who were persecuted for it. Yet this could not have satisfied Chosroes and would in fact have been tantamount to nullifying the treaty, if it did not accompany some provision against a repetition of the very circumstances which had occasioned the war in the first place.

Religion was intermingled inextricably with politics in Armenia. The present revolt, for instance, had started from an interference with the rights of worship but had derived much of its strength from the dissatisfaction of the nobles with the financial administration.⁵⁶ The Christians had the bitterest hate for the fire-worshippers and especially for the priestly caste, bloodthirsty and intolerant enemies, and at the same time a proportionately close bond of sympathy with Rome. Of itself this rendered Persia's hold on the country precarious always. Tiberius would have been foolish to think that he could add the further incitement to revolt of immunity and sanctuary in the Empire and still be getting a "steady hold on peace," while by no stretch of the imagination could Chosroes be pleased—it is Menander's word—at such an arrangement. What Tiberius must have proposed, then, was to transfer the country to Persia irrevocably and to grant her a perpetual and clear title. The region had been repeatedly subject to Rome but she now renounced all claim on it whatever. Tiberius thus escaped the dilemma that either Rome's universal sovereignty over Christians had to be abdicated or Persia's right to independence denied. He asserted the former by guaranteeing a refuge to any Armenian who thought himself persecuted for his faith, and, to safeguard the latter, he gave assurance that he would

⁵⁶ Stein, *Stud.*, p. 21.

respect Persia's territorial integrity. On the other hand, Chosroes had pledged himself solemnly to tolerance of Christianity as a fixed policy and could be trusted to leave his subjects entirely free in its exercise if that liberty involved no weakening of his own power.⁵⁷ In short, to solve the Armenian problem, Tiberius dissociated religious lordship from political imperialism and claimed no more than the right exercised by any modern state to protect its own nationals. Once this difficulty was solved, Chosroes realized that he could restore order, and that no further trouble could arise because he had no intention of persecuting the Christians and Tiberius had none of using religion as a pretext for aggression.

Chosroes showed himself cordially ready to accept these conditions when Tiberius decided to seek the return of Dara in exchange for the evacuation of Armenia and Iberia.⁵⁸ He even offered to buy it back. The Persians were so delighted with the moderation of his terms that they consented to this also, and with the addition of little or no money. Suddenly they won a great victory in Armenia, which practically necessitated the reorganization of the Roman army in the Orient.⁵⁹ Chosroes' attitude veered completely around. He tried to bully the Romans into submission by threatening an immediate offensive in the East where the three-year truce had not yet expired.⁶⁰ Tiberius made a desperate effort to save the situation. In an extremely confidential conference known only to his trusted adviser Maurice, he offered to give any amount set by Chosroes, provided only that the whole transaction remain absolutely secret and Dara be restored ostensibly as a free gift. This too was rejected and hostilities resumed. The negotiations were not broken off but had to begin over again from the ground up.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 73. Menander, *FHG*, IV, 250 f.; *Exc. de leg.*, pp. 466-68.

⁵⁹ Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 69 and 71 f.

⁶⁰ In 575 a truce had been made for three years to extend to Syria only and not to Armenia, where all the fighting had taken place since. This truce had still a short time to run. Cf. Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 60-62, 72-74.

According to Menander,⁶¹ Tiberius sought Dara:

That in the future there could be no cause of war and certainly not for gain. For the only advantage of the city of Dara to the Romans is that it is very strongly fortified and the bulwark, as it were, of the Roman Orient. Partly, therefore, to give the Romans for the cession of so large a territory the consolation of having received back their own, and partly to leave not even a spark of war, he resolved to rescue Dara by money or in any other way. Now with regard to the need of making peace on a basis of equal honor the Persians had decided and agreed before the battle in Armenia. Moreover they were just on the verge of surrendering Dara for little or no money as soon as it became evident that the Romans had evacuated Persarmenia and Iberia. While they were in the midst of the discussion of this last point, news arrived of a great Persian victory in Armenia. . . . And, therefore, the barbarian was again bold and conceited and fairly strutted and threatened to attack before the expiration of the three-year truce.

As Menander is at pains to point out, Dara could not compare with Armenia in wealth, economic importance, or source of income to the State. It was valuable to the Romans only for the purpose for which it had been founded, namely, as an anchor in the front line of the *limes*. Jovian, in ceding Nisibis, put a tremendous fortress in Persian hands, but built no counterbalance to it on his own frontier. The Romans had, as a result, to make Constantina their principal base. Since this town lay about seventy miles from the border and Nisibis only eleven,⁶² it meant

⁶¹ *FHG*, IV, 250; *Exc. de leg.*, pp. 466 f.; John of Ephesus, VI, 12, p. 233, ed. Brooks; *ibid.* VI, 21, p. 243. John of Ephesus puts a different interpretation on the impasse over Dara altogether from Menander. According to him, Tiberius thought of Dara only because Chosroes proved so pliable on every point and Chosroes took umbrage at this. Thus came about the open break. The impression created by Chosroes on John, who was quite favorably disposed towards him, was that he earnestly desired peace and regretted bitterly the loss of property and life and the immense suffering occasioned by the war (cf. esp. pp. 241 f., ed. Brooks). Consequently he was very tolerant and sympathetic with a young and fiery prince like Tiberius, but he felt that the demand for Dara after he had been so gracious was an impossible imposition on his good nature. This is so obviously partisan and naïve as to require no further attention. Its real interest is the attitude of the Syriac citizen of Rome toward the Persian king.

⁶² Ernst Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis*

that the Persians always had the advantage in the frequent plundering expeditions so characteristic of these wars. A very rich though limited region lay practically at their mercy. Furthermore, if the Romans wished to fight a pitched battle, they had to risk it at a relatively greater distance from their permanent headquarters. It was to correct this weakness that Anastasius had erected Dara. With Dara and Nisibis both in enemy hands, all the handicaps became more acute. Nevertheless, however much the circumstance might embarrass operations, it by no means constituted an insuperable barrier, and Dara's strategic importance must not be exaggerated. One needs no more proof of this than that Rome ultimately won the victory by an overwhelming margin, yet gained the decision by campaigns conducted exclusively from Constantina.

The city had thus a purely military value, and if permanent peace based upon mutual good understanding governed the relations between the two countries, it obviously made very little difference who held it. But here again, as with the subsidies and the right of sanctuary, international jealousy aggravated the problem. Ever since the fortress had been built in defiance of previous agreements, it had remained a sore spot with the Persians.⁶³ In all his treaties Chosroes exacted from Justinian that he should not make Dara his base, but Constantina.⁶⁴ Thus the incongruity of a huge stronghold, created at vast expense for no other purpose, with its arsenals empty, its granaries unstocked, its stout walls and bastions unmanned, stood as a reproof to Anastasius and the Romans for the breach of their word. In fact, only because of this very defenselessness had Chosroes ever been able to capture it. On the other hand, the Romans regarded the city as "their own."⁶⁵ The psychological implications of this statement of Menander's are striking. It shows that the Romans had grown so accustomed to

1071, Vol. III of A. A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, Corpus Bruxellense historiae byzantinae, 3 (Brussels, 1935), p. 10. The distances were obtained from measurement on his Map I.

⁶³ Güterbock, *Byzanz u. Persien*, p. 44.

⁶⁴ *Loc. cit.*, and pp. 69 f.

⁶⁵ *Supra*, p. 301.

the situation created by Jovian's treaty that they looked upon their present frontier as stabilized. Subconsciously they thought of all territory left them by that settlement as "their own," and anything beyond as Persia's. The phrase brings home how completely the traditional imperialism had been abandoned in practice and how much public opinion took for granted Persia's autonomous existence. Consequently, if Chosroes retained Dara, the Romans would resent it as an undue encroachment upon their inherited possessions, especially since its alienation could be represented as a confession that they had done wrong in erecting it.

Therefore, it was in entire consistency with his aim, permanent peace on a basis of equal honor, that Tiberius sought to regain the city. He did not regard the situation as a very proximate occasion of trouble, though it certainly could develop into one of those constant irritants that made friendship between the two countries impossible. It was only a "spark of war," but it was a spark. He suggested the return of Dara largely as a gesture of good will from his new partner. Rome, victorious though she was, had given everything and Persia nothing. When the Emperor purposed to inaugurate a new era in their relations and substitute for the old petty jealousy and suspicion an alliance based on mutual confidence, then, if at any time, he had the right to hope for encouragement and reciprocity. He confined his proposition after all to something that would "give the Romans the consolation of having received back their own," and that benefited Persia in nothing more really than keeping it out of their possession. For fear that he might produce on his ever touchy neighbors the false impression that he was forcing his immediate advantage, he proffered further an equivalent in cash. The above interpretation of Tiberius' motives seems indisputable both from Chosroes' first spontaneous reaction and from the Emperor's subsequent secret efforts. The Persian king evidently appreciated the spirit of conciliation that prompted the request and responded in kind, agreeing without demur, demanding little or no money, and making his generous gesture towards peace, in the significant words of Menander, on a basis of equal honor. During the subsequent confidential negotiations, when Tiberius was doing every-

thing possible to save the treaty, he insisted above all on preserving appearances. The mere acquisition of Dara meant nothing to him; the gesture of cordiality and the illusion at least of hearty co-operation, everything.

But the news of the victory in Armenia brought Chosroes back to his old insolent self-assurance and the time-honored tactics. He had succeeded in his ruse of prolonging the treaty conversations until the tide turned. Pressing his immediate advantage he tried to throw the Romans into a panic and bully them into accepting terms that would again leave him in the ascendancy. Sweeping away at one stroke the whole of Tiberius' efforts towards a lasting peace founded on mutual respect, he resorted to every means, fair or foul, of emerging from the conflict with visible evidence of superiority. The only difference between his present proposals and the settlement of 561 with Justinian was that Dara superseded both tribute and denial of asylum as the palpable token of Persian preponderance. As excuse for his *volte-face*, he contended that he had acquired the city by legitimate conquest, while Armenia had been gained through treachery and breach of faith.⁶⁶ It needs no great stretch of the imagination to visualize the reaction of public opinion to such an attitude. The ordinary citizen would have acquiesced with an ill grace in the loss of Dara, which in his eyes belonged rightfully to Rome, even if he had received in exchange the blessings of permanent peace; but he could never endure its alienation if it was to be flaunted as a trophy of conquest and reproach for his country's perfidy.

Tiberius had no alternative but to continue the war. To yield at this point was simply to confirm his rivals in the fatal belief that, if only they held out long enough, the difficulties of Rome's position would give them the upper hand always and inevitably. To sacrifice self-respect meant a treaty with precisely the same defect as all previous arrangements, which were merely—and this was well understood by both parties—truces. Tiberius was unalterably resolved upon a fight to the finish, either equal honor or death.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Menander, *FHG*, IV, 250; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 467.

⁶⁷ According to Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 5, 73, 84, n. 12, 117 f., Tiberius together with

In autumn of 577, then, the negotiations were suspended and both sides once more appealed to arms. Through 578 the Romans dominated the situation and laid waste deep into enemy territory, capturing Singara and Aphumon with all of Arzanene.⁶⁸ Chosroes had even to flee precipitously from his summer residence. As a result, Tiberius in the following winter made another effort at peace, offering along with Persarmenia and Iberia his new conquests in exchange for Dara. Moreover, to show that his sentiments had not altered and that he still sought permanent friendship, he restored spontaneously a number of distinguished captives, some even of the blood royal. Chosroes would certainly have met his terms but his death intervened.⁶⁹

This event brought into sharper relief the real issue between the two countries. His son and successor, Hormisdas IV, had an arrogant, autocratic, and violent disposition.⁷⁰ He scorned the time-honored diplomatic custom for the rulers of the respective realms to give formal notification of their accession, a ceremony observed even during war, and left no doubt as to his reason, that he regarded the Romans as beneath his notice.⁷¹ He displayed

his successor Maurice had only one reason for continuing the war and that was to win Armenia as a recruiting ground. The willingness to surrender the country was only a ruse forced by the circumstances. The Roman defeat had been long prepared by the insubordination in the ranks and dissension among the high officers, and Stein supposes that this condition remained secret to all but the Emperor, who, realizing that the loss of Armenia was inevitable, determined to make capital of his private information by getting back Dara at least. His flank thus secured in Mesopotamia, the conquest of Armenia could begin again at a more convenient moment. This ingenious reconstruction is rendered unnecessary, however, by a closer study of the sources for the final outcome of the war, which did not come within the scope of Stein's work. Theophylactus Simocatta leaves no doubt that Maurice's aim, and consequently that of Tiberius, was peace on a basis of equality, an aim obviously irreconcilable with Stein's hypothesis.

⁶⁸ Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 74-76; Baynes, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 275.

⁶⁹ *Loc. cit.*; Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 89 f.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 90 f.; Baynes, *loc. cit.*

⁷¹ For the custom, cf. R. Helm, "Untersuch. üb. d. auswärt. diplom. Verkehr . . .," *Archiv f. Urkundenforschung*, 12 (1932), 388. Theophyl. Sim., III, 17, 1; John of Ephesus, VI, 22, p. 243, ed. Brooks, puts in his mouth the remark: "Why should I send gifts to slaves?"

the same overbearing attitude in the negotiations for peace, yielding nothing and demanding everything. He insisted upon payment of the annual subsidy and refused either to grant the right of sanctuary or to surrender Dara. He realized that these items had no intrinsic value. But Chosroes in winning them had attained the goal of Sassanid ambition, and they symbolized the culminating glory of 350 years of fierce uphill struggling. Hormisdas hated to forego the long result of his country's toil and sacrifice. "It was no disgrace," he observed, "for his father to give up what he had himself conquered, but it is a disgrace for a son to dissipate his paternal inheritance."⁷² He was, in fact, the Persian counterpart of Justin II, an extreme nationalist, who recognized no middle course between crude assertion of dominance and complete humiliation. He could see but one course consistent with the honor of his country: uncompromising maintenance of supremacy. "What are the Romans so proud of," he asked, "that they demand the restoration of Dara? Wherein, pray, have they been superior to the Persians?" Such a question implied obviously that any concession was an admission of defeat and inferiority. The Romans were astonished at the rough repudiation of their moderate demands.⁷³ Menander expresses the quintessence of Tiberius' program in the words, ἐξ ἰσοτιμίας, 'on a basis of equal honor.' It was the ultimate gesture of conciliation, far more than the relative weakness of Persia entitled her to;⁷⁴ in the light of history, an unparalleled honor, and when her enemy scorned it, Rome had no choice but to fight on. So for the next twelve years, while his armies were annihilated and his territory subjected again and again to punishing raids and its inhabitants wasted with famine and the sword, Hormisdas refused obdurately to ratify the terms of the treaty until at length he was hurled from his throne and a usurper Bahram VI marched upon his

⁷² Menander, *FHG*, IV, 257 f.; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 215.

⁷³ Menander, *FHG*, IV, 258; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 216.

⁷⁴ Hormisdas himself acknowledged the immense superiority of Rome in men and money but hoped against hope that her difficulties in Italy and the Balkans would ultimately force her to yield the point of honor. This is stated with cynical frankness by a Persian envoy; Menander, *FHG*, IV, 261; *Exc. de leg.*, pp. 217 f.

capital Ctesiphon.⁷⁵ It is a vivid commentary upon the autocratic, violent temper of Hormisdas and on the extreme nationalistic arrogance of his compatriots that they counted equality with Rome ignominy and died rather than acknowledge it.

Meanwhile in 582 Tiberius died and Maurice fell heir to his throne and policy. He too put the settlement of the Persian question above all others and carried on the same program, permanent peace *ἐν ἴσῃ μοίρᾳ*, as Theophylactus paraphrases Menander with a significant change of wording, 'on a basis of equal shares.'⁷⁶ The revolt of Bahram VI just referred to at last provided an opportunity for Roman diplomacy to achieve its ends. Chosroes II, after assassinating his father, ascended the throne but was attacked also by the usurper.⁷⁷ He had to flee for protection to Roman territory and by a strange irony claim asylum under the very privilege against which Hormisdas had fought so bitterly. Immediately upon his arrival he addressed a letter to Maurice pleading for aid and restoration to his throne.⁷⁸ The Emperor received him with open arms and promised to help enthusiastically.⁷⁹ But he met with the most obstinate resistance from a hardheaded and realistic senate.⁸⁰ They argued that it was to the obvious interest of Rome to let Persia fall into anarchy and be thus forever rid of the threat to her security. Moreover, Bahram had offered as the price of neutrality to restore all the territory lost to the Empire by the treaty of Jovian and they urged the acceptance of these

⁷⁵ J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene (395 A.D. to 800 A.D.)* (London, 1889), II, 105-10; Baynes, *Cambr. Med. Hist.*, II, 277-79.

⁷⁶ III, 17, 2; V, 15, 2.

⁷⁷ Baynes, *op. cit.*, p. 279 f.; Bury, *op. cit.*, p. 110-12; Martin J. Higgins, *The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice*, Catholic University of America Byzantine Studies, 1 (Washington, 1939), p. 26-30; 42-45.

⁷⁸ Theophyl. Sim., IV, 11, 1-11.

⁷⁹ Theophyl. Sim., IV, 12, 8; Evagrius, VI, 17.

⁸⁰ This is not mentioned at all by the Greek sources but only by the Oriental, e.g., Sebeos, *Histoire d'Héraclius*, tr. with notes by F. Macler (Paris, 1904), p. 15; cf. Higgins, *op. cit.*, p. 44, n. 17.

terms.⁸¹ To this policy of extreme imperialism and aggression Maurice was unalterably opposed. In the face of hostile public opinion he determined to reject Bahram's tempting offer and restore Chosroes. The territorial settlement that he imposed was under the circumstances extraordinarily moderate, the only change from Tiberius' terms being the assertion of Roman preponderance in the larger portion of Persarmenia.⁸² Naturally the payments ceased and Dara became Roman. In the remarkable self-control of these terms, Maurice showed himself the true follower of Tiberius' ideals. Maurice aimed, like him, at a permanent settlement of the eastern question and regarded the present situation as a God-sent opportunity to win lasting peace. This is precisely the reason he gave for accepting Chosroes' territorial terms rather than Bahram's; moderation in victory was the only hope of stability.⁸³

That his policy was one with his predecessor's, the sources leave no doubt, as shown by the similarity of expression in Menander and Theophylactus, to which attention has been drawn above.⁸⁴ But, as previously stated, Rome's foreign relations were ever dominated by the ideal of the Christian World State,⁸⁵ and to treat with any other country on a basis of genuine equality implied the abdication of this position. As a matter of fact, Maurice in his treaty with Chosroes in 590 did renounce explicitly Rome's claim to exclusive authority over the world and he acknowledged to Persia an equal right to existence as a sovereign and autonomous nation.

This is first of all the basis on which Chosroes pleaded for his restoration. Directly upon taking sanctuary in Roman territory, he wrote as follows:

⁸¹ Theophyl. Sim., IV, 14, 8, does not explicitly include Armenia in Bahram's offer, but the context implies it unmistakably; *ibid.* IV, 13, 25. For the treaty of Jovian, cf. *supra*, p. 282.

⁸² Theophyl. Sim., IV, 13, 24. Sebeos, pp. 15, 27, gives the exact boundaries. Cf. Honigmann, *Ostgr. d. byz. Reiches*, pp. 28 f.

⁸³ Theophyl. Sim., IV, 13, 25.

⁸⁴ *Supra*, p. 307.

⁸⁵ *Supra*, p. 280.

Even in the beginning the Divinity wrought as it were two eyes to shine on the world from above, the mighty kingdom of Rome and the prudent scepter of Persia. These are the great powers that winnow the unruly and warring peoples and that impart to the daily life of man complete culture and order. The condition of world affairs thus described has its logical consequences. Evil and mischievous demons roaming abroad in the world strive eagerly to overthrow the beautiful order established in the universe by God. If their effort is not to meet with success, the pious and godly who have received from God the treasury of wisdom and the arm and sword of justice must take the field against them. Bahram . . . wooing the throne for himself . . . has thrown all Persia into confusion. He attempts everything to quench one great eye of power. As a result, the uncivilized and marauding barbarians will gain a free hand against the civilized Persian State and later have unrestrained power to do great harm to Rome's own tributaries.⁸⁶

The tenor of this letter is quite clear. Chosroes reminds Maurice that the highly organized Persian State on his eastern frontier provided a powerful bulwark against the barbarian hordes. Rome and Persia, therefore, have a strong interest in mutual preservation. Rome had herself acknowledged this by making the contributions to the joint defense of the Caucasus. But this co-operation implied a relationship which Chosroes draws to its farthest logical consequences, yet which no more than expressed how the two great states stood to each other in popular estimation at least throughout the East. Chosroes believes that both Empires are of divine right, designed by eternal Providence for the protection of civilization and foreseen in its plan as the two lights in the firmament.⁸⁷ It is against both nations that the enemies of God, the spirits of evil, lay their snares. Both are equally the champions of civilization against barbarism, the protectors of peace and culture against the warring and destructive hordes, the defenders of humanity against the aggression of the savage. In short, Chosroes pleads with Maurice on the basis that Persia is as much a part of the divine order in the universe as Rome itself and as essential to

⁸⁶ Theophyl. Sim. IV, 11, 1-11.

⁸⁷ This was an ancient, traditional, and thoroughly Zoroastrian figure; cf. Petr. Patr., *FHG*, IV, 188; *Exc. de leg.*, p. 393.

the fulfilment of the divine plan, the very basis of Rome's own claim to universal sovereignty.

Thus Chosroes proposed that each country modify its political philosophy sufficiently to admit the independent existence of the other. He suggested as the basis of stable relations the mutual recognition of their common mission to foster peace and civilization. We may feel sure that in this he merely echoes what his close advisers knew to be the sentiments of Tiberius and realized would make a deeply favorable impression on Maurice. In any event, this is the cause that induced the Emperor to make the astounding decision to save Rome's deadly foe from anarchy and ruin and build it up once more into a mighty power. In order to inform his readers of the motives for such extraordinary conduct, Theophylactus has recourse to the rhetorical device of the speech. Just before the final decree, a Persian ambassador convinces the Senate in an address that actually expresses Maurice's motives for his quixotic resolve. With his opening words the Persian envoy puts squarely the objection to the restoration of Chosroes:⁸⁸

⁸⁸ That much of the speech is devoted to answering this objection is conclusive proof that Theophylactus intended the speech to be an integral part of his history, not a merely extrinsic adornment. Both Evagrius and Theophylactus (cf. *supra*, p. 307) leave the reader with the impression that Maurice received Chosroes with enthusiasm and proceeded immediately to restore him. Chosroes II, however, arrived at Circesium before March 7, 590, yet Maurice made his decision only a short time before January 7, 591 (cf. Higgins, *Persian War*, pp. 30, 42-45). Even then it was contingent upon Chosroes' winning considerable support in his own country, as is quite clear from the whole tone of the narrative (cf. Theophyl. Sim., V, 1, 6-8; 2, 2; 13, 4-6). The discrepancy between Maurice's hearty and ready promise and his tardy, hesitant execution would be very baffling to understand if the Oriental sources did not add the information about the opposition of the senate (cf. *supra*, p. 307). This clears up the whole difficulty. For some reason or other, which the present writer confesses he cannot fathom, the contemporary Greek historians took the utmost pains to conceal the conflict in the administration. Theophylactus, however, by inserting this whole speech to refute what the Oriental sources unanimously declare to have been the senate's logic, indirectly betrays his knowledge of the controversy, and, without mentioning it, gives the reader the justification for Maurice's conduct. The entire line of reasoning in the ambassador's supposed address must have been actually what motivated the Emperor. Furthermore, only this passage mentions the precise terms of the treaty (IV, 13, 24). Since Theophylactus never specifies them again it is even

I am well aware of the objection that if Persia should be shorn of its might and sink into oblivion, Rome could batten in a peace created by the disappearance of its enemy. Such a view shows a poor knowledge of what will be to the interest of the Empire. It is impossible for any one monarchy to compass the boundless concern of the government of the world, to keep to its course with the rudder of a single mind the whole creation on which the sun looks down. The earth bears a character that is the antithesis of the supernal kingdom; it is forever steered into storms by man unstable of nature and corrupt of mind because of his tendency towards evil. The earth, then, can never win to the singleness of the divine and first leadership. If, therefore, Persia is bereft of its might, that might will instantly pass to another. . . . The Medes succeeded to the Babylonians and the Persians to the Medes. . . . Alexander the toy of fortune, who in her irony smiled on him for a brief space, . . . tried to extend by force his sway to wherever the air moves or the sun shines. He longed to enslave the world beneath a single ruler and a single judge. But his lust for power was extinguished with his life and conditions returned to their former state of partition into multiregal, to coin a word, rule. For never can homogeneity be engrafted on the disparate.⁸⁹

Not the least remarkable feature of this very remarkable passage is the mention of Alexander the Great, the source from whom flowed all occidental ideas of exclusive world sovereignty. It shows the amazing hold of his superhuman figure on the imagination of even the sixth century and bears tribute to the strong historical sense of Maurice. The Emperor before his elevation to the purple and while still in command of the army in Syria conceived the grandiose design of marching directly on Ctesiphon and thus end-

more cogent proof that he intended the speech to be an integral part of the history. On the other hand, it certainly does not represent Theophylactus' own view. He wrote shortly after the final victory of Heraclius over Persia and before the Arab conquest (cf. V, 15, 6f.). He had lived through the terrible years in which Chosroes II, with a cynical disregard of all his promises, had annexed the larger part of Roman Asia and even occupied Egypt. For him the name Persian was synonymous with treachery and deceit and Chosroes supreme in both (IV, 13, 1). So to Theophylactus the notion of treating Persia as an equal or of trusting any pledge from her seemed nothing short of fantastic. This is why he regards the whole war as absurd (*supra*, p. 292, n. 39). It was preposterous in his mind to look upon Persia as anything but barbarian and Justinian's policy of temporizing by payment of the subsidy was the only possible attitude.

⁸⁹ Theophyl. Sim., IV, 13, 6-13.

ing the Persian question for good.⁹⁰ The allusion here suggests that the great conqueror hovered ever present to his mind as he led his troops across the desert and down the Euphrates surveying regions not penetrated by a Roman army since the days of Julian. The expedition barely escaped disaster. Maurice's dream-castles came tumbling about his ears and brought him back to his good sense. It is a commonplace of history that the Mesopotamian Valley cannot be controlled unless the Iranian plateau that dominates it is also mastered. No Emperor, not even Trajan, dreamt of pushing the boundaries of Rome to the Hindu Kush and the Indus, yet that is precisely what a policy of aggressive imperialism in Mesopotamia necessarily implied. If such a conquest seemed chimerical to Rome at the height of her vigor it was an insane venture for the Empire at the end of the sixth century. All this forms the self-evident premise of the reasoning for the restoration of Chosroes. The merest allusion sufficed to remind any senator, silly enough to entertain the notion, that by incorporating in her domain the tremendous territory offered by Bahram Rome committed herself to a fantastic program of expansion ending no one knew where.

But the notion was not so silly if their only formidable foe disappeared swallowed up in anarchy, and, more particularly, if the immediate acquisitions would be secure from attack because the enemy was non-existent. To this Maurice might have answered, stressing the main point in Chosroes' letter, that the net result would only be to open up even farther flung borders to ever more numerous hordes of barbarians, but he did not. Instead, he rebutted that the argument was founded upon an illusion. The senators deceived themselves in thinking that the revolt of Bahram had ushered in a permanent reign of chaos. On the contrary, it was only a momentary commotion. Disorder might hold sway for a brief period but it could not endure. Inevitably in the past the East had come under a single rule and inevitably in the future it would coalesce into one empire. The ages had seen the Babylonians fall only to be succeeded by the Medes, and the Medes in

⁹⁰ Stein, *Stud.*, pp. 92 f.

turn made way for the Persians, and the Persians gave place, when the fated day dawned, to the Parthians. In other words, the East was a natural unit, one by the immutable laws governing the universe, and as such it would continue. The Sassanid dynasty might die, but the East would live on.

This premise, that the East was a natural unit, led by an inevitable logic to the revolutionary conclusion that the World State was not only an unattainable ideal, it was a contradiction in terms. Further, the allusion to Alexander is intended to hint at much more than the ridiculous lack of proportion between Rome's grandiose pretensions and her physical resources. Maurice emphasizes that he was unique in history, unprecedented and inimitable, the miraculous darling of fortune, a sport of nature flashing across the universe and swiftly gone. The very transitoriness, the very singularity of his feat shows the exception that proves the rule. His meteoric career, the breakup of his conquests immediately upon his death, typify and exemplify a political theory expressed by Theophylactus in terms that seem old-fashioned but that may be paraphrased as follows. It was Rome's age-old conviction that no one could build up a great empire at the point of the sword alone. For at the end the conqueror gazes out over random peoples collected within purely artificial boundaries, where heterogeneous nations jostle and institutions clash and a myriad babel of tongues confuses the ear; he rules not a community but chaos. A state, in the real sense of the word, must have some organic principle of life, some common ground upon which its varied nations, without merging their individuality nor renouncing their peculiar customs, may meet and find a basis for mutual intercourse and points of mutual agreement. But if the East has a natural unity, it has, therefore, a distinctive individuality, a soul all its own, disparate from the West and incompatible with it. East and West have each its own personality and temperament. Any attempt to unite them into a single system must necessarily prove ephemeral and abortive. Alexander had to fail. Rome, even if her resources were equal to subduing the world, even if she could duplicate the amazing luck of the great conqueror, could still never "win to the divine and first leadership." After all her efforts she would gain only an artificial unity lasting no longer

than the constraint that extrinsically imposed it, because East and West can never form a community. "Never can homogeneity be grafted upon the disparate." For Tiberius and Maurice this is in the very nature of things, the result of original sin and Adam's fall. Perfect harmony is for heaven; it cannot exist upon earth. They interpreted the design of God in the light of history and came to the conclusion that "He has given the earth a constitution the antithesis of the divine kingdom." In the first burst of exultation at the victory of Christianity Eusebius had written: "One God is announced to all, one Empire stands to receive and embrace all . . . destined to unite the entire human race in the bonds of an eternal concord."⁹¹ With this ideal Maurice confronts the practical lesson of human experience: "It is impossible for any one monarchy to compass the boundless concern of the government of the world." This impossibility is founded on the will of God and is coeval with creation. Far from intending the earth to reproduce the eternal harmony of heaven, "the Divinity wrought two eyes as it were to shine on the world from above, the mighty kingdom of Rome and the prudent scepter of Persia." With unmistakable definiteness and explicitness Tiberius and Maurice thus renounced Rome's immemorial prerogative of exclusive dominion over the earth and proclaimed that after a millennium the World State had come to an end.⁹²

Such is the theory at the root of what Menander called a treaty on a basis of equal honor and Theophylactus preferred to style a treaty on a basis of equal shares. Theophylactus' choice of phrase is illuminating.⁹³ Previous to 590, Rome claimed exclusive dominance of the earth; thenceforth she agreed to divide the world into

⁹¹ *Supra*, p. 280.

⁹² Rome's right over Christians outside her boundaries seems to have affected practically Armenia alone. At least so much is implied in the reason given for the changed status of the country, that it had occasioned the whole war; cf. Theophyl. Sim., IV, 13, 24. To the present writer, religion appears to have had the decisive influence on the relations between Rome and Persia. As no one, however, has made any study of the religious background of these wars, its role remains obscure. Our ignorance of this phase of the situation to a certain extent obscures also our understanding of the political relations.

⁹³ The only clue to the meaning of this expression peculiar to Theophylactus is found in the speech of the Persian envoy (*supra*, p. 309). This is further striking proof of its vital importance to his history.

two equal shares. She reserved the West for herself; the East she assigned to Persia. Her eternal enemy was to become her eternal friend, each with a distinctive outlook on life, each with a peculiar culture and civilization, yet both associated in a common mission to spread their blessings amongst the savages beyond their borders. In this noble alliance for an exalted cause, they would bury their insignificant quarrels forever, gaining a new strength and a new dignity in keeping with the honor to which God had destined them from eternity.

The enlightened author of this solution was Tiberius. Nature had gifted him with an insight amounting to clairvoyance, with a rare humanity and broad tolerance, enabling him to recognize the potentialities for good in the very factors that made Persia Rome's bitterest enemy. No wonder that Maurice fell completely under his spell; no wonder he adhered to his principles under circumstances the most paradoxical imaginable. To carry through a policy of permanent peace with an equal, he had practically to provide the equal; rather than abandon it he re-created Persia. The whole plan, unfortunately, foundered on the uncontrollable ambition of Chosroes II, who could not resist the temptation offered by the anarchy of Phocas' reign, smashed the treaty, and for a brief space ruled supreme in Asia. But his was a fatal error. He brought destruction upon himself and final irretrievable ruin on his country. He left Persia so exhausted by her endless, fierce, and tragically foolish rivalry with Rome that she fell an easy prey to the new and formidable Arab invader. The annihilation of Persia by this unsuspected barbarian enemy—the very peril against which the farseeing statesmanship of Tiberius would have protected her completely—provides the conspicuous justification of his policy. Persia, had she adopted his solution wholeheartedly, would have saved herself and together with Rome would have made a new epoch in world history. Despite its failure the whole conception was truly magnificent. Its inspired creator, Tiberius, emerges a towering figure not unworthy to stand beside the greatest personalities in the long annals of the Empire, and Rome herself, who for so many centuries had reigned majestic and solitary queen of the world, was perhaps never so majestic as in the moment when she graciously invited her envious rival to share her lofty position.

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